



August 2009



Jodi Ross  
Town Manager  
978-692-5500

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### Dear Westford Residents,

On July 30th, 2009 a Special Town Meeting was held for the purpose of asking our voters to appropriate funding to contain the perchlorate plume, which has continued to travel, and is in the vicinity of the Cote and Stepinski wells. About 245 registered voters attended the town meeting and almost unanimously voted to approve funding an upgrade for the Cote well, installation of the Stepinski well, installation of transmission lines, and the construction of a treatment plant to handle the additional flow. We believe if we can pump the perchlorate contaminated water out of the ground, and treat it before it passes the Stepinski well, we will prevent perchlorate from contaminating the rest of the aquifer, and ultimately reaching the Depot well. Now that we received town

meeting approval, we have submitted an application to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in anticipation of receiving both State Revolving Funds and Economic Stimulus Funds. If approved, we expect to receive a very low interest rate, and possible forgiveness of principal. I have spoken with our Lieutenant Governor, Tim Murray, and he is supporting our request, and doing what he can to assist us where possible. Thank you to all who attended town meeting, and we will continue to keep you posted on this very important project.

The Cameron Senior Center renovation/expansion project is well underway. According to Tom Mahanna, Chairman of the Permanent Town Building Committee, the project is

progressing on schedule and on budget. The site work is continuing, and they are in the process of constructing the foundation. The initial utility work is completed, and Tom is hoping to have the parking lot completed within the next month or so.

The final design for the Town Hall is nearing completion, with the parking lot situation still under review by the Planning Board. We are planning to go out with construction bids this fall.

*Continued on page 2.*



### Dear Westford Residents,

*Continued from page 1.*

We formed a task force who is working diligently on the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the lease of the "Roudenbush-occupied" buildings. We are hoping to bring a draft RFP and lease to the selectmen for approval in September, for release in early fall. All Roudenbush activities are continuing as usual during this process.

A Department of Public Works (DPW) task force was formed in the spring, made up of staff from departments that would be affected by this reorganization. The task force established its mission - to define and develop a DPW organizational structure that meets the current and future needs of the town, creating efficiencies, long-term cost savings, enhancing

services, with an implementation plan, and provide a recommendation for the fall special town meeting. After spending months collecting and analyzing data, both in-house, and from other communities that have created a DPW in their town, the task force voted unanimously last week to support the creation of a DPW, and bring forth a proposal to the Board of Selectmen. We plan to do so at the August 25th selectmen's meeting, and if approved by the selectmen, this will appear as a warrant article at the fall or annual town meeting.

As most of you know, our annual town meeting in May voted to change the date for our annual town meeting - from May to March. We are working diligently now on preparing for this

change as accelerates our budgeting process by 6 weeks. Also, on July 30th, the Board of Selectmen called our fall Special Town Meeting for Monday, October 19, 2009. The town staff and board and committee members have begun working diligently to prepare for both of these events.

Thank you again to all who attended our special town meetings this spring and summer. Enjoy this beautiful weather we are finally experiencing!

Sincerely,

Jodi Ross



*The Cameron Senior Center renovation/expansion project is well underway. According to Tom Mahanna, Chairman of the Permanent Town Building Committee, the project is progressing on schedule and on budget.*



## Westford Fire Department August Safety Message

Experts predict that the 2009 Atlantic hurricane season that began June 1 and ends November 30, has only a 25% chance of being above normal in activity. "NOAA scientists predict 9 to 14 named storms, with four to seven becoming hurricanes, of which three could become major hurricanes of Category three strength or higher," according to a NOAA official. An average season sees 11 named storms, with six becoming hurricanes, including two major hurricanes. Whether we experience any major hurricanes or serious thunderstorms this season being prepared and taking necessary major storm safety precautions is advised in keeping yourself safe. The following safety tips will assist you in assuring your safety during a major storm.

- Have flashlights and extra batteries available when the power goes out. Observe candle safety rules for candle fires have doubled in the past decade. Never leave burning candles

unattended or in low areas where pets or small children could come in contact. Candles need space and should be in appropriate candleholders.

- Check to make sure your smoke alarms are in working order. Should you not have battery back up smoke alarms we recommend you install some battery smoke alarms.

- Carbon Monoxide alarms protect your family from the Silent Killer. Check to make sure your CO alarms are in working order and you have one on each level of your home and within 10 feet of bedroom doors.

- Use of Generators outdoors only. Generators and other fuel-powered machines should be used outside the home and away from windows or vents. Carbon monoxide fumes are odorless and can quickly overwhelm you indoors. Generators are not to be operated in enclosed spaces or garages where CO can

accumulate.

- Alternative cooking appliances. Do not use a charcoal or propane grill inside the home, including Coleman or similar type's stoves or lamps. This could pose a carbon monoxide or an explosion hazard.

- Natural Gas Safety. Should you smell or hear leaky gas or you believe there is a gas leak (smells like rotten eggs) leave immediately and leave the doors open. DO NOT turn electrical switches or appliances on or off and Call 911.

*Continued on page 4.*




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*"Check to make sure your smoke alarms are in working order. Should you not have battery back-up smoke alarms we recommend you install some battery smoke alarms."*



### August Safety Message

*Continued from page 3*

- Remember Water and Electricity Do Not Mix! Watch for downed wires and always treat down wires as "LIVE". Electrocuting or serious electrical burns can be caused by just approaching a down wire. Be sure to explain this to younger children.
- Do not venture into a flooded basement should outlets or the fuse box be under water, it could electrically charge the water and electrocute you.
- Charge up your cell phone battery in advance but remember to limit your use for during a storm power outages can affect cell towers causing your cell phone to roam using battery power. Excessive calls during a storm can also jam the airwaves which could affect emergency responder communications. Please follow these simple safety measures to keep yourself and family safe during a storm. Never hesitate to call 911 should you

have an emergency but we do ask you for your cooperation in avoiding non-emergency calls to police and fire during a storm.

Donald R. Parsons  
Fire Prevention Officer



"Additional pet safety information can be accessed through the State of Massachusetts Animal Response Team website: [www.smart-mass.org](http://www.smart-mass.org)"

### Westford Fire Department Caring For Your Pets in the Hot Weather

As the summer heat approaches, here are some preparedness tips to consider when caring for your pets:

- Never leave pets in a car, even with the windows down. The inside of a car can reach temperatures in excess of 150 degrees in a matter of minutes.
- If possible, pets should be kept indoors during excessive heat.
- If keeping a pet outside, make sure that pets have adequate shelter from the sun and plenty of fresh water at all times.
- Plan outside activities with your pets during the cooler parts of the

day: early morning and evening. Limit the outside activity of your pets during the heat of the day.

- During hot weather sidewalks and pavement radiate excessive amounts of heat and can be too hot for the pads of your pet's paws. Consider that if the sidewalk is too hot for you to walk barefoot, it is too hot for your pet to walk on.
- Allow access to the coolest part of your home. If you don't have air conditioning, or you turn it off while at work, make sure your pet can get to a cool place, such as a basement.

- Take extra precautions in hot weather for dogs that are elderly, overweight or snub-nosed.

- Always have a disaster plan in place for you, your family and your pets.

- Remember, WHEN YOU GO, THEY GO. DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT THEM. If you are told to evacuate, take your pets with you. DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND.

Additional pet safety information can be accessed through the State of Massachusetts Animal Response Team website: [www.smart-mass.org](http://www.smart-mass.org)





## Westford Water Department **FREE ORGANIC LAWN CARE WORKSHOP!**

September 23rd,  
6:00 pm,  
Roudenbush  
Community Center

Organic lawn care is much simpler than it seems. We've become so used to the idea that a green, attractive lawn is attainable only through the use of synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides. The fact of the matter is: An organic living and healthy lawn will naturally stand up to many different conditions like weeds, insects, and disease.

Want to give it a try?

The fall season is the best time of the year to make a change from synthetic chemical to organic fertilizers. So, why keep your family and pets at the risk. Join the workshop, and learn the basic steps in converting your lawn to an organic one.

Learn about soil conditions, lawn/turf seed selection, fertilization, and insect/disease control.

Sign-up today!  
Workshop will be held  
September 23, 2009,  
6:00-7:30pm, at the  
Roudenbush

Community Center.  
Please register in  
advance at  
[www.roudenbush.org](http://www.roudenbush.org)

Chester Mandrik  
(Founder of Yard Spice  
Organics, LLC) brings  
unique experience with  
over 30 years in the  
field, and has proven his  
abilities with two present  
organic lawn  
demonstration sites. He  
is an active member of  
the Massachusetts and  
New Hampshire Organic  
Farmers Association,  
Ecological Landscaping  
Association, and  
Beyond Pesticides  
Organization.

## Westford Highway Department

The month of July brought us 7.5" of rain here in Westford; a near record amount of precipitation! What does all that rainfall mean to the Highway Department? Well, most of our work is done outside and it has limited the amount of jobs we've been able to complete on our Spring/Summer schedule. It also means responding to emergency situations such as clearing clogged catch basins and blocked culverts. On drier days, we've begun our resurfacing program, including supporting the Water

Department with their paving needs. We've also taken advantage of dry times for doing pavement markings and cross walks.

We're continuing to perform our annual Sweeping program and are about ¾ complete with the process. The final piece of our brush clean up was a piece of Boston Rd. owned by both the Town and Mass Highway. The Highway Department removed all downed tree limbs and cut back the brush.

We continue to do our  
roadside Brush

Trimming, which will  
continue until the fall.

**Traffic Advisory!**  
Stimulus money is coming to Westford! Please be aware that Mass Highway will be starting a shovel ready project on Route 110, in between Bobs Auto Service and Nashoba Veterinary Hospital in a couple of weeks. This work will consist of road widening and signalization of several intersections. Please allow extra time when traveling in this area of town. The project will be completed in approximately one year.



*"We continue to do our roadside Brush Trimming, which will continue until the fall."*



### Westford Senior Center

The Community Food Pantry is at the temporary address of 10 Church Street rear Senior Center entrance to the United Methodist Church in Graniteville. This non-profit 501© 3 is for all members of the community in need of food or wishing to make a donation of food, gift certificate or a check payable to "Friends of the Cameron Senior Center", PO Box 2223, Westford. The Food Pantry hours of operation for those in need of are the third Monday of every month from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m., third Wednesday and third Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Donations are accepted Monday thru Friday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. Summer months the shelves are depleted and we are in need of the following donations of non-perishable items in unbreakable containers: fruits and vegetables, soups, rice, pasta , noodles, sauce, tuna, spam, salmon, chicken, complete dinners such as beef stew, canned pasta , coffee, tea, juice, powdered milk, peanut butter, pancake and muffin mix, canned potatoes, crackers, puddings and jello, cleaning and products, and toiletries. We also

have ongoing demand for large brown grocery bags. Deliveries of groceries are available to elderly or disabled residents by contacting our Outreach Coordinator at 978 399-2326. Drop off locations for the food pantry are at Market Basket, Shaw's in Groton, and Nabnasset Country Club. Next to the bottle return machine at Market Basket you can deposit your bottle return slip and those donations also benefit the Food Pantry. The food pantry has been in existence since the 1980's and originally established by the Kiwanis. Presently 400 people are served monthly at the food pantry, 85% of those who need food are employed, 96% are families and 42% of the children are under the age of 18. Volunteers will have a brief meeting on Thursday, October 1, at 12:30PM at 10 Church Street as we plan for our return to the renovated site in 2010.

#### Cooling Station

Arrangements have been made to deal with a potential heat spell this summer. Previously, we have used the Cameron Senior Center as a

cooling station, but, since we've moved and are only at the United Methodist church during regular workday hours, additional arrangements have been made. In the event of a heat spell, we will welcome people at the United Methodist Church during regular work hours (8:00AM - 4:00PM Monday through Friday) and, if necessary the Community Room at 65 Tadmuck Road nights and/or evenings will be used. Note\*If anyone needs the cooling station at Tadmuck Rd. on evening/weekend hours, they should call the Police Department business number at 978-692-2161 in advance to request that they notify the Housing Authority staff. There are no beds or cots at that location, but there are comfortable chairs, a TV and kitchen area. This will probably only be needed once or twice during the summer (if at all this year!) Of course if there were a lengthy heat spell, we understand that Emergency Services would need to be activated.



## Health Department to Offer Free Shingles Vaccine to Residents 60 and over

Effective August 1, 2009 the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, through federal stimulus funds, is providing local boards of health with a limited supply of Zoster Vaccine for uninsured and underinsured residents. "Zostavax" is a vaccine approved by the FDA for individuals who are 60 years of age and older for the prevention of shingles.

Shingles, a disease that is caused by a reactivation of the chicken pox virus, can develop at any age in those who have a history of chicken pox. However, the older population has a far higher chance of developing this disease and of developing complications from it. Shingles usually begins as a very painful rash on one side of the body, often lasting up to 30 days. Some people

develop shingles on the face which can cause scarring and occasionally blindness. Most people find the pain of the rash resolves as the lesions heal. One in five people develop a syndrome called Post-Herpetic Neuralgia (PHN) where the pain never resolves, even after the rash has disappeared. PHN is very physically and emotionally debilitating for those who suffer from it.

The Zoster vaccine is a onetime dose that prevents shingles from developing in approximately 50% of the population who receives it. For those who do develop shingles after the vaccine, the severity of the disease is greatly lessened and the chance of developing PHN is also greatly reduced.

The Westford Health Department will provide the vaccine to interested Westford residents over 60 years of age regardless of their history of having had chicken pox. Seniors who have already had a case of shingles can still be given this vaccine to prevent future episodes of the disease, but is not a treatment for a current case of shingles. People who should not receive this vaccine include those who are allergic to gelatin or neomycin, those who have a weakened immune system or those must take high doses of steroids.

Interested seniors should call the Health Services Division at 978-692-5509 to sign up for the vaccine and to receive more information by August 28, 2009.



## Volunteers Needed For Flu Season

In anticipation of the upcoming seasonal and H1N1 flu season, the Health Department is looking for medical and non-medical volunteers to assist at numerous flu clinics. If you have some available time, please call 978-399-2549 and volunteer with the Upper

Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps. See [www.umvmrc.org](http://www.umvmrc.org) for additional information. Help your community in time of need!





### Westford Health Department Minimum Recommended Septic System Maintenance

The Westford Health Department (and the Mass DEP) recommends these tips to avoid potential problems and/or premature failure of your septic system.

- Have your septic tank pumped out and system inspected for problems every 2-3 years by a licensed septic pumper/contractor (listed in the yellow pages).

- Keep a record of pumping, inspections, and other maintenance.

- Practice water conservation. Repair dripping faucets and leaking toilets, run washing machines and dishwashers only when full, avoid long showers, and use water-saving features in faucets, showerheads and toilets.

- Learn the location of your septic system and drainfield. Keep a sketch of it handy for service visits. If you don't have a septic location plan check with the Westford Health Dept. who may.

- Divert roof drains and surface water from driveways and hillsides away from the septic system. Keep sump

pumps and house footing drains away from the septic system as well.

- Take leftover hazardous household chemicals to your approved hazardous waste collection center for disposal. Use bleach, disinfectants, and drain and toilet bowl cleaners sparingly and in accordance with product labels.

- DON'T allow anyone to drive or park over any part of the system. The area over the drainfield should be left undisturbed with only a mowed grass cover. Roots from nearby trees or shrubs may clog and damage your drain lines.

- DON'T make or allow repairs to your septic system without obtaining the required health department permit. Use professional licensed contractors when needed.

- DON'T use commercial septic tank additives. These products usually do not help and some may hurt your system in the long run.

- DON'T use powdered laundry/dish detergents as they can precipitate out (turn back into solid

form) past the septic tank and in the leach system that is not designed to treat solids.

- DON'T use your toilet as a trash can by dumping nondegradables down your toilet or drains. Also, don't poison your septic system and the groundwater by pouring harmful chemicals down the drain. They can kill the beneficial bacteria that treat your wastewater. Keep the following materials out of your system:

- NONDEGRADABLES: grease, disposable diapers, plastics, etc.

- POISONS: gasoline, oil, paint, paint thinner, pesticides, antifreeze, etc.

- Do not add a garage disposal to your home unless your septic system was designed for one. A garage disposal is not allowed on a septic system that was not specifically designed for one because the disposal can shorten the life of your septic system. If you have a system that was designed for a garbage disposal and a disposal is currently installed, have your system pumped annually.

*If your septic system has an effluent T- filter (and it should if you had a system installed within the last 5 years or so) it should be checked and cleaned regularly (at minimum on an annual basis). Consult a pumper (that knows your system) as far as their recommended interval for checking/cleaning. Failure to do so may result in a back up which could have been avoided. If you have any questions, please contact the Westford Health Department's Environmental Services Division at 978-692-5509.*